



Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

summer: statewide; migrant: statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

killdeer

Charadrius vociferus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Aves
Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Charadriidae

Features

An adult killdeer is nine to 11 inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. It has a brown back and two black bands on its white chest. The rust-colored tail is apparent in flight.

Natural History

The killdeer lives in fields and lawns, ditches, and along the shores of rivers, ponds, and lakes. It eats ants, beetles, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and true bugs. The call of a killdeer is a very loud and distinguishable "kill-deeh." Migration occurs during the day. Spring migrants begin arriving in February. Nesting occurs from April or May through June. The killdeer nests on the ground in gravel, rocks, or short grass areas. Four tan eggs with black markings are laid. The adult may try to lead an intruder away from the nest by pretending that is injured (broken-wing trick). The killdeer is the most abundant and widespread nesting shorebird in Iowa.